



AMINE, THE MORISCO RAIDER.

BY MRS. CAROLINE ORNE.

"A fuller blast ne'er shook the battlements." "Here's a sight for thee; look thee, a bearing cloth fit for a 'quire's child."—Walter's Tale.

On a frowning rock, overlooking a wild and troubled stream, which wound through the mountainous regions of Germany, rose one of those baronial castles, common in the Middle Ages. The owner of the castle, Baron Walderberg, had with most of his retainers gone on a warlike expedition, and his wife, Lady Elnor, was sitting alone in her chamber, furnished after the fashion of the times, with rude magnificence, but falling far short of the luxury and comfort demanded by modern refinement. It was late in autumn, and the night was wild and gusty. At intervals the sleet and rain were driven violently against the windows and the wind shrieked like a troubled spirit round the corners of the castle, or swept with a hollow moan along the corridors. Lady Elnor was sitting in front of a large deep fireplace in which was blazing a cheerful wood fire, with her eyes fixed on the pages of a volume containing a collection of those wild romances based on the adventures of daring knights and of distressed damsels immured in enchanted castles. So absorbed was her attention, that she scarcely heeded the night storm raging without. It was only when a wilder gust than ordinary came driving the sleet against the clattering casement, threatening to tear it from its hinges, that she would for a moment, raise her large melancholy eyes from her book. At the feet of his mistress, lay a beautiful spaniel, apparently enjoying a comfortable nap.—All at once he started up, and looked eagerly towards the door. Footsteps drew near, and the voice of Gasper, an old and faithful servant, was heard in earnest colloquy with that of a stranger.—The next moment the door was opened by Gasper.

"My lady," said he, "there is a benighted traveler, who craves a shelter for himself and a child he has in his care, and who insists on seeing you himself."

"Let him come in," said Lady Elnor.

At these words the stranger came forward. Long thick boots, armed with spurs, a surcoat of coarse, substantial cloth, but tied to the throat, and for cap, formed a costume well calculated to shield him from the buffeting of the tempest to which he had been exposed. Particles of still unmelting sleet glittered among the elf-locks that fell in dark and tangled masses over his collar, and gave a wild expression to a set of prominent and somewhat sharp features, deeply bronzed from exposure to the weather, or the ardent sun of a more southern clime. He held by the hand a little girl, whom, 'til the moment of his entrance, he had borne in his arm, apparently five years old.—A large shawl of warm and rich material, which had sheltered her from the storm, trailed upon the floor, and was secured in such a manner as to cover her head and most of her face, except a pair of large gazelle-like eyes, which looked up to Lady Elnor with a half timid, half confident expression as she bent over her to remove her nearly saturated covering. Lady Elnor could hardly suppress an exclamation of delight when she had removed the shawl, for the child was very beautiful. Her soft black hair had already attained such length and exuberance as to cover her neck and shoulders with a cloud of glossy curls, and her features of the most perfect mould and symmetry, were of a kind to give a promise that the germs of intellectual wealth implanted within, would one day expand into the richest bloom. Lady Elnor took her by the hand to lead her nearer the fire, but she shrunk back and clung to her rough looking protector.

"Pardon her, lady, the child has known and loved me from her birth. I will, with your leave take off this wet garment, and take her to the fire myself."

"By all means," she replied. Gasper, placed a seat in that warm corner, and stirred the fire.

In a few minutes the stranger was quietly seated with the child in his arms, who leaned her face against the broad chest, with that loving, satisfied air, which fully proved the truth of what he asserted. The spaniel that had watched with a keen and jealous eye every movement of the stranger guests, as well as the countenance of his mistress and the tones of her voice, perceiving every thing to be adjusted stretched himself lazily before the fire, as if to resume his nap; an occasional quivering of the eye lids, however, betrayed his slumbers to be feigned, not real.

"Can I have a few words of conversation with you without a witness?" said the stranger to Lady Elnor.

"Gasper is an old and faithful servant," she replied, with a smile, "and is one of

those discrete persons who never hear what is not intended for their ears."

Soon this he took a jewelled ring from a casket which had been concealed in his vest, and presenting it to her, asked her, if she remembered it.

"I do," she replied, changing color. It is the very ring I gave Amine, a beautiful Morisco maiden, when we parted for the last time. But why does she send back the ring?"

"To tenants of the tomb jewels are of no value. It moreover, will serve as a token to show you that I am no impostor."

"Amine is then dead?"

"Yes, she died six weeks ago, in my wife's arms, and I am here to fulfill her last request."

"Let me hear it."

"She wished you to receive and protect her child. Her kindred have long been banished from Grenada, and her husband's will not receive the child of a Morisco mother. You, she said, would be above such prejudices."

"I take pleasure in saying that I am," she replied, bending over the child, and caressing her. "I will not ask you her name, for I cannot look upon this beautiful face, so exactly resembling the Amine's I so well loved, and call her by any name except her mother's."

"Amine, is her name," he replied.

"Her features seemed familiar to me the moment I saw her, yet I could not recall to mind the person she resembled. If I have been rightly informed, Amine married the eldest son of a Spanish nobleman."

"She did. His father Don Diego D'Alvarez, is one of the wealthiest grandees in Spain. Displeased with his son's marriage, he banished him from his presence. Henceforth the rough life of a soldier was his, 'til a year ago when he fell on the field of battle. I was by his side, and bore him to a peasant's hut.—He lived only long enough to recommend his wife and child to my care."

"I must know the name of one," said Lady Elnor, "who appears to have so faithfully fulfilled his trust."

"My name is Rodovan," he replied, "and am of a race which, though proscribed and banished, I am not ashamed of."

The little Amine had, by this time fallen into a deep and quiet sleep. Lady Elnor took her in her arms and placed her upon some cushions, telling Rodovan that Gasper would conduct him to the apartment prepared for him. He rose, but seemed loth to quit the chamber.—At last he drew near Amine, and regarded her with a look of great tenderness.

"Poor child," said he, "in the morning she will ask for me, and I shall be gone. Do not wonder that it is hard for me to part with her. Hundreds of times she has fallen asleep on my bosom as you saw her to-night, and more than all, she has the blood of my own people in her veins."

He now turned abruptly away, and told Gasper he was ready to go. It was now midnight, and the fury of the tempest was spent. Stars began to look through the torn skirts of the clouds, and the wind was heard only in low and hollow murmurs. Rodovan did not sleep, but lay watching from his window the first appearance of dawn. With its first faint glimmer he rose, and descended to the stable and fed his horse, and before the people were astir in the castle, was on his way.

When Amine awoke in the morning, and beheld every thing look strange around her, and found that her protector was not near her, she felt very lonely and desolate, but she did not weep.—When Lady Elnor found she was awake she went to her bed and kissed her, and spoke kindly to her; but the child's heart yearned for the kind, familiar voice of him who was already far away.

"Will he come back again?" she said to Lady Elnor, who was trying to persuade her to eat some breakfast, and when she replied, "not to-day," her lips quivered and her large soft eyes filled with tears. Although told that he would not return, she took her station at a window commanding a view of the mountain-pass that led to the castle, from whence nothing could entice her for more than a few minutes at a time, and whenever she saw a horseman advancing in the distance, her whole heart seemed sent forth in the earnest and wistful gaze with which she regarded him. Many days she watched for his return, and when she found he came not, her affections began to wind themselves around Lady Elnor, and she began to listen with a truthful and confiding heart to her soothing words. Soon that happy abandonment of spirit, with which childhood itself gives up to the pleasures of the passing hour gave the rose to her cheek and sunshine to her brow. The old castle began to echo to her footsteps, and her mirthful laugh, and

the clear, bird-like music of her voice. With the dog by her side, the same that regarded her and her protector so suspiciously the night of their arrival at the castle, she soon began to wander by the shores of the wild mountain stream, to explore the recesses of the deep and solemn forests, and to roam over the breezy hills, her dark locks floating on the wind.

Ten years had passed away, and Baron Walderberg, as well as lady Elnor regarded her as fondly as if she had been their own child. Not the least intelligence had ever been received respecting Rodovan, although he promised to return in one year. Amid all the comforts of her new home, Amine had never forgotten him. She thought of him when she wandered in the lonely forest path, or sat alone in the still evening. The stormy evening, too, when she nestled close to his bosom, and could scarcely hear his kind cheering words, for the howling of the tempest often came back to her. The image of her young and beautiful mother, as she recommended her to Rodovan's protection, filled a still holier place in her memory. She was the one bright angel of her dreams, and the imaginary guardian of her waking hours.

The feuds of the turbulent barons of that period, often gave employment to Baron Walderberg and his retainers.—It was after an absence of several months that he returned with a young gentleman in his train, whom he had fallen in with on the road, and invited to share the hospitality of the castle. Though his appearance was very youthful, he was tall and of a most noble presence. At his entrance he removed his cap enshrouded with fur, and revealed a broad, open brow, shaded with hair dark as night,—eye-brows equally dark, arching a pair of deep-set eyes which seem ever to change with the varying passions of the mind, a somewhat high but well shaped nose, a firm and handsome mouth, with a sweet expression of countenance, were perhaps, a better letter of recommendation than any he might carry in his pocket. They were so, at least, to Amine. On the other hand, it would have been unnatural for any young man who had the least perception of the beautiful, even had his affections been pre-engaged, to have regarded her with sentiments which did not partake of pleasure and admiration. Living in almost perfect seclusion, Lady Elnor consulted her own taste in the room of fashion, relative to her protegee's costume. On the present occasion, over a skirt of rich satin, she wore another of lighter texture, deeply embroidered with gold. A satin vest, which was fitted exactly to her form, and a purple, gold embroidered tunic, over which, her below her waist, fell her rich glossy hair, like a dark veil, made her appearance in the eyes of the young stranger as beautiful as it was novel.

As all were about to seat themselves at the well and plentifully supplied board, the arrival of two other guests was announced. As they drew near the door of the hall, the stranger who first arrived whispered a few words to Baron Walderberg, and hurried from the room in an opposite direction. He who first entered, wore the habit of a Spanish gentleman of rank, and had apparently attained life's meridian. The other who appeared in a humbler guise of an attendant, was in person tall and athletic, and his complexion very dark.—The attention of both was immediately directed to Amine, who appeared to interest them as deeply as the savory viands the Baron and his lady pressed them to partake. Her eyes dropped beneath her gaze, till their long lashes almost rested upon her cheeks, which glowed like the half folded leaves of the morning rose.

After supper the Spanish gentleman requested a private interview with the Baron. They had no sooner left the hall, than his attendant, drawing Amine aside, inquired if she knew Rodovan, who ten years before brought her to the castle.

"I shall never forget him," she replied. "Not a day passes but I think of him."

"But you would not know him?"

"If he looked as when I saw him last, I should."

"He does not. Time and sorrow and imprisonment have wrought a great change in him, but the sweet rose he so loved has suffered but little alteration, except to grow more beautiful."

These last words were pronounced in a softened voice, such as Amine knew she had heard before, and suddenly grasping his hand in both of hers, she said, "You are Rodovan."

loved me, I feared that Amine, the woman, would forget her early and humble friend if not soon him."

"I never have, and never shall cease to think of you with gratitude and love. But why did you not come as you promised? Many weary days I watched for you. The carresses of Lady Elnor were, at those times, nothing to me."

"At the time I promised to be here, I was in prison. When I returned to Spain, which I did for the sake of securing some property I left there, your grandfather sought me out, and charged me with having secreted you, and commanded to inform him where you might be found. He had formerly refused to receive you when applied to by your mother, and I now soon found he was anxious to obtain you only to bury you in a convent, or to get rid of you by still baser means, that he might obtain possession of a large estate which fell to your father. I refused to give him the information he desired, which so incensed him, that he informed against me, and procured my imprisonment for having dared to enter the kingdom after my people were banished. I remained in prison till his decease, which happened only a few months since, when your uncle, Don Diego D'Alvarez, procured my release, on condition that I would conduct him to the place of your abode, he having formed a plan of uniting you to your cousin, Philip, his only son, and thus secure the valuable estate which you inherit from your father."

"That was my uncle, then, whom you accompanied hither?"

"Yes."

"I can never marry his son," said she, as her thoughts turned to the young and handsome stranger who arrived in company with the baron.

"That you shall not," he replied, "if when you come to see him you do not like him—not if there be any wit in this head, or strength in these arms. Yet this much will I say for him, he is a handsome noble-minded youth and every way fitted to win the heart of a fair maiden."

"Amine, who soon after her interview with Rodovan, retired to her own apartment, saw nothing more that evening, of the young stranger, nor did she learn any thing concerning him, except that her waiting woman informed her that his name was Ferdinand. A variety of new and agitating emotions had sprung up in her bosom. Though past midnight, she had not yet slept. The moon was at its full, and the winds were hushed.—She rose, and went to the window. The river, which, when swollen with the autumn rains, was so wild and turbulent, now glided beneath with a soft and pleasant murmur. Suddenly the dash of oars arrested her attention, and looking in the direction whence the sound proceeded, she beheld a small boat containing two persons. She had no time to note the appearance, before the boat entered the deep shadow of the turrets, thrown quite across the river. In a few minutes a tenor voice, deep, clear, and musical, accompanied by the notes of a harp, came floating upwards singing one of those provincial songs by which the youthful knight was accustomed to reveal his passion to his lady love. She could not for a moment doubt that Ferdinand was the minstrel, for no person belonging to the castle or its vicinity, had so rich and charming a voice. Still less could she doubt that she was the person addressed, for the name of Amine joined with the most passionate epithets, frequently occurred during the song.—As strain after strain, each sweeter than the former, arose to her ear, the thought of what Rodovan had told her respecting her cousin Philip, grew more and more painful, and by the time the musician closed his first song, she had come to a firm resolution to reject his suit, however strenuously urged by his father in his behalf. At the close of the second song more passionate and tender than the first, she again heard the oars dip into the water, and left the window, lest her white night dress should be discerned through the gloom, when it emerged from the shadow of the building. The music appeared to have a soothing effect upon her mind, for when she again sought her pillow, she soon fell into a deep and refreshing sleep. In the morning when she descended to breakfast, her heart fluttered, and her cheeks glowed at the idea of meeting the midnight minstrel, but he did not make his appearance.—Her uncle was present, and treated her with great affability and politeness.—Rodovan, too, from the lower end of the table, contemplated her with as much pride and satisfaction as if she had been his own daughter. When the meal was finished, Don Diego D'Alvarez mentioned that circumstances rendered it necessary for him to depart.

"My friends, the Baron and his lady,"

said he, taking his niece by the hand, 'have promised to use their influence in forwarding the suit of my son, whenever he may arrive, and you will pardon a father, my dear Amine, when I say that his gifts both of mind and person are such as ought to recommend him to your favor.'

Amine blushed and murmured some unintelligible reply, for Ferdinand was in her mind, and her heart revolted at the idea of receiving the addresses of her cousin, whom she felt assured she could never love. Rodovan, much to her satisfaction, she found he was going to remain for the present at the castle, her uncle finding it necessary to furnish himself with an attendant more familiar with the country through which he was going to journey. As soon as her uncle took leave, Amine sought Lady Elnor to beg she would use her influence with the Baron to send a messenger to Spain, to dissuade her cousin Philip from undertaking his contemplated journey to the castle. Lady Elnor smiled and asked what possible objection she could have to his coming. Amine cast her eyes on the ground but made no reply.

"I think I could answer for you," said Lady Elnor, "but will content myself with warning you against bestowing your heart too lightly upon one who appears in the character of an adventurer—that which is readily won being too apt to be lightly valued. As respects your cousin Philip, it is too late to think of preventing him from coming. Though my husband and myself, certainly will not compel you to accept him, we shall endeavor to redeem the promise we made your uncle, as far as is proper. For your own part, guard well your heart, and remember that a deceitful tongue may utter flattering words and sing pleasant songs."

A little anger, in spite of her efforts to suppress it, was mingled with the feeling of shame awakened by these last words, and when Lady Elnor requested her to sing a song and accompany it with her lute, she felt half inclined to refuse.—Her anger was like the April flower, however, that soon flits away, and with an emotion of reproach for having indulged it, she took up her lute and sung one of the popular songs of the time with even more pathos and sweetness than usual.

A few days afterwards, Lady Elnor said to Amine, "The Baron and I have been thinking of giving a masquerade. We have received sure information that your cousin, Philip d'Alvarez, will be here a week from Wednesday next, and we are not unwilling to honor him by some rare entertainment. We shall invite all the gentry within forty miles, who will not fail to provide themselves with magnificent dresses, but we must not suffer you to be outdone."

"Were I to consult my own inclination," replied Amine, "I would adopt the simple habit of a Hungarian peasant girl. I once dressed myself in it for sport, and thought it became me better than a richer dress."

"It would become you undoubtedly, but one more splendid would become you much better. I lately read the story of a beautiful princess, whose dress was described as being so charming, that I wish you to exactly imitate it."

Amine readily yielded the point, for she thought much more of meeting her cousin Philip, than of her dress. She felt glad of an opportunity to appear in his presence for the first time so disguised that he would be unable to distinguish her from others; while, with the assistance of Rodovan, she felt sure of being able to detect him.

During the intermediate time, she and Ferdinand often met, but in their intercourse, though so frequent, he never for a moment forgot that respect and deference prescribed by the romantic spirit of chivalry common to the period. Once, and only once, he ventured to press the snowy hand held out to receive from him some beautiful flowers which had found root on the side of a precipice, and which he had with some danger obtained.

"It was a rich, mellow, sunset, And not a breath crept through the rose air, And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer."

Ferdinand and Amine stood together on the battlement. Both were silent, yet the heart does not always need the medium of language to express its sentiments. On the present occasion neither felt any difficulty in reading that of the other. At length Ferdinand broke the silence.

"To-morrow evening," said he, "you expect your cousin Philip."

Amine assented.

"You are aware," resumed he, "that he possesses many advantages which I make no pretensions to. He is the sole heir to a princely domain, is allowed by the ladies to be comely in person, and has re-

ceived the honors of knighthood—three things which no woman is apt to hold as of light value. The Baron and Lady Elnor, moreover, have promised to espouse his cause. Can I, the unknown adventurer, have any thing to hope when such a rival enters the field?"

"You can have nothing to fear from one I hold in such disdain. Had it not been that I inherit a few broad acres which he wishes to add to his own fair domain, the despised Amine might for all him have remained in obscurity."

"By this good sword, you wrong him. The heart of Philip d'Alvarez is not a mercenary one," he exclaimed impetuously.

Amine raised her large, dark eyes to his with a look of surprise.

"You think it strange that I should say aught in favor of a rival," said he, smiling, "and I think myself, that it might have been more polite if not more generous, to have remained silent."

He then drew a bracelet from his vest, the clasp of which was encircled with a brilliant of the first water, and fastened around her arm.

"Should you wish to undo this," said he, "press your finger firmly against the inner edge of the clasp. Possibly, when you come to see your cousin, he may please you better than you anticipate—you may prefer him to me. If so, give him this bracelet. To me it will be a signal to leave this place forever."

Saying thus, he pressed her hand to his lips, and left the battlements.

The following day, as evening drew near, those invited to attend the masquerade began to assemble. The old castle seemed converted into a fairy palace. The brilliant lights shed a flood of radiance over the different costumes, presenting every variety from the magnificent robes of the oriental despot, down to the humble garb of the peasant. Amine, with her long night-black tresses braided with jewels, and her rich purple robes, wrought with gold, fully realized to the mind of Lady Elnor, the description she had read of the beautiful princess. She had been told that her cousin Philip had arrived, but no one amid the gay assemblage answered to the idea she had formed of him; nor could she any where discover Ferdinand. It was not long, however, before a person in the habit of a Tyrolese hunter, his cap bound with fresh gathered flowers, drew near the spot where she stood.

"Amine," said he, in a voice she at once knew to be Ferdinand's, "the hour of trouble draws near. Philip d'Alvarez is in the castle, and will soon seek you. A description of your dress has already been given to him by Lady Elnor. An hour hence I may be far away, with only this memorial of you remaining to me."

As he spoke he touched a withered rose she had once given him, which he had wreathed with the newly-plucked flowers that bound his cap. He waited for no reply, but turning away was soon lost among the crowd. Fifteen minutes had elapsed, when the attention of all was attracted by the entrance of a mask in the rich and picturesque habit of a Hungarian noble. He stopped and interchanged a few words with Rodovan, whom he had already recognized through the disguise of an Arab chief, and then at once made towards a recess to which she had retired to inhale, for a moment, the fresh air from an open window. She pressed her hand against her side, as if to still the audible beatings of her heart, for she felt assured that it was Philip d'Alvarez. He was she imagined, near the size of Ferdinand, but his step seemed prouder and firmer, and his bearing more dignified. In a minute more he was at her side, and at once confirmed her suspicion by informing her that he was her cousin. He continued to address her in a voice scarcely above his breath, yet every tone, as well as word, was full of tenderness and passion.

"It is a mockery," said she, angrily, "to thus address a person whose face you have never seen."

"Never see!" repeated he. "I have seen you without this mask hundreds of times. One year ago, chance threw me among the wild and picturesque hills surrounding this castle. I often hovered near you unseen, and once when your horse took fright—but why should I recall what you may have forgotten?"

"I shall never forget that my life was saved by a young hunter at the imminent hazard of his own, who had so little wish to cultivate an acquaintance with those he had so signally saved as to refuse the pressing invitation sent him the next day to dine at the castle. Think not, however, that for that reason, either my friends or myself, ever for a moment ceased to be grateful."

"It was not in my power to accept the

(Conclusion on the last page.)